

Observer Reports for the December (January) issue of The Voter

Shawnee County Commission-11/14/24

Elvera Johnson, observer

All 3 Commissioners Present

Observer missed the first few minutes of the meeting.

Public works:

Commissioners approved to extend the contract with an engineering firm to continue assessing the county bridge inventory and inspection. They authorized making plans for 3 bridge replacements in North Topeka to be addressed in the next 2 years. One of the bridges will likely have to be placed at a different location.

Commissioners authorized contracts to purchase a Caterpillar mini-excavator, a Caterpillar backhoe and a Caterpillar compact track loader. These contracts used Sourcewell, a government purchasing cooperative.

Sheriff's office:

Commissioners approved renewing the annual software maintenance agreement with Tyler Technologies, with the cost being shared by the Sheriff's office, DOC, Emergency Management, Topeka Police and Topeka Fire.

Parks and Recreation:

Authorized contracts with 3 different landscaping companies for 3 clusters of parks.

Approved the department soliciting bids for purchase of supplies and equipment for various programs in 2025.

Authorized a request to research the possibility for installation of a sky trail at Playland in Gage Park.

Approved a request for qualifications for professional design services to bid plans to build 4 additional tennis courts at Kossover Tennis Center.

Noxious Weeds:

Approved purchase of one road side spraying unit.

Human Resources:

Authorized execution of a contract with Blue Cross and Blue Shield to include increases to the High Deductible Health Plan deductible.

Treasurer:

Approved the reclassification of the Treasury Accounting Specialist I to Treasurer Accountant I.

Corrections:

Renewed maintenance of the TimeKeeping Guard1 Plus system. It is used for folks on suicide watch, among other things.

Information Technology:

Authorized the execution of a contract to buy and install network equipment and cabling at the Parks and Recreation Kansas Complex.

Stormont Vail Events Center:

Approved RFPs for replacement of basketball goals, resurfacing and repair of the Robbins Wood Basketball court and for a modular sports flooring surface.

Approved payment for repairs of the fire alarm system in Domer Arena. Lengthy discussion about a request for additional funding subsidy for the 2024 fiscal year. Commissioners were concerned about the shortfall and losses of revenue from 2 structures adjacent to the arena. They want this researched and will revisit in a work session.

Considered execution of a memorandum of Understanding with Top City Trails Alliance for a Connector Trail Project between the Kaw River State Park and the Kansas Museum of History.

A land owner affected by the plan expressed opposition.

Two Commissioners expressed opposition as it is currently designed. They want the issue to be discussed with all land owners and a workable route that clears up the opposition. Commissioners did not approve the plan in its present form.

Public comment:

Henry McClure talked about his view that taxpayers' money is being misused. He objects to developers from out of state making development investments without knowing the unique history of the property.

Administrative Communications:

The Treasurer said the office is dealing with software difficulty, so the property tax statements will be a little later this year. Taxpayers are welcome to pay online or come into the office to pay.

Election Commissioner Howell said that election certification day will be Monday, November 18 at 9:00.

No Executive Session was called.

Shawnee County Commission-10/31/24

Elvera Johnson, observer

All 3 Commissioners present

District Attorney:

Commission approved a 60-month vehicle lease agreement with Enterprise for the District Attorney.

Corrections:

Beginning selection process for food services for a new 4-year contract.

Approved a new 3-year contract for department training.

Renewed the annual inspection of the 5 generators.

Deferred for a week approval of the contract for HVAC annual service.

Parks and Recreation:

Accepted the grant from Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks for Recreational Trails at Family Park. Twenty percent of the cost will be paid by the County.

Public Comment:

Henry McClure appeared in a shirt with a flag design talking about encouraging more use of private sector funds and less government regulation.

Administrative Communication:

Sheriff's office said the canine games were canceled because of predictions of bad weather.

Commissioner Cook said that unfortunately Sunflower Paving did not finish the 46th street roundabout on schedule. They are being fined a daily amount.

No Executive Session was called.

Topeka City Council-11/12/24

Observer: Vicki Arnett

All city council members were present either in chambers or on zoom. Council member Ortiz arrived late.

LWVTSC member Carole Jordan was appointed to the Topeka Board of Zoning Appeals.

Doug Snook was appointed to the Board of Plumbing Appeals

Toby Taggart was appointed to the Board of Building and Fire Appeals.

The council heard a presentation from Wichita State University which has served as a contractor to gather data to analyze the city Fire Medical Transport Report. The city of Topeka receives the most calls, however, Shawnee County manages the contract with Emergency Medical Response, ambulance service. The recommendations include good government recommendations to collaborate with the county commission to coordinate with the emergency manager to assure timely and safe ambulance and fire response in the city.

The consent agenda included an item to support the Kansas River Weir Improvement Project for engineering services.

The council approved authorization to move forward to amend the Community Improvement Plan and 2025-2027 Capital Improvement Budget in order to apply for a loan from KDHE to finance the inventory of replacing lead water service lines. Council member Hiller voted No due to concern for the decision being based on estimated cost rather than more specific cost estimates.

The council approved the labor agreement between the city and Teamsters Local No. 696 representing street maintenance employees which supports wage increases through 2027.

The council discussed and expressed concerns over the proposed redesign of Huntoon St. from Gage to Harrison. The council had concerns as expressed by the police dept such as speeding and sighting at intersections, the fire department concerns due to ability to operate equipment through tight intersections, respond to emergencies and

access hydrants including function as EMR without blocking entire street for several blocks. The school district bus service has experienced issues with the curb islands in the road as have drivers during bad winter weather. The street department has had trouble with snow removal on 12th street. The proposed redesign is exactly like 12th street.

The council heard a presentation from Whitney Damron, the city's state legislative lobbyist. The Topeka state legislative agenda includes retaining local sales taxes, requesting the state review property tax statutes. They also are concerned with mandates regarding fire helmet cameras and how to administer. They have concerns for recruiting police and fire fighters and are supporting lowering the age to 20 for completion of training in order to go directly to work. The city is supporting Metropolitan Topeka Airport Authority in promoting property to the state. The city Human Resources has asked the city to support the Crown Act which will be re-introduced.

During administrative communications comments included congratulations to the fire academy graduates, recognition of the state of the city/county event, reminder to put lights on your bicycle since it is dark so early, no food at Hotel Topeka and the city is asking for food truck vendors and an announcement the mayor's office is recruiting 5 citizens to serve on the Citizen Government Review Committee to evaluate the city/council form of government.

There was a need for executive session to discuss personnel matters.

Topeka Sustainability Advisory Board-11/1/24

Observer: Vicki Arnett

Mary Monzyk was absent. All other members were present in person.

The board heard a presentation by Michelle Cuevas Stubblefield on the Momentum 2027 Topeka Riverfront Vision Plan. The Riverfront Advisory board is a 27-member board which includes one city staff person, Council member Karen Hiller and Commission Bill Riphahn. The other 24 board members represent business interests. Dawn Buehler with the Kansas Riverkeepers is the only member who represents interests of ecology and sustainability. The board recommended including a member of the Sustainability Advisory Board.

The next meeting will be December 6, 2024 and will be a presentation by Tom Vogue, Data Management Analyst for the city IT Dept. He is updating the energy tracking dashboard.

SEAMAN SCHOOL BOARD MEETING, November 11, ,2024

Patti Bishop pattibishop908@gmail.com

School Website <https://www.seamanschools.org/>

Under Board Docs

Superintendent Mr. Brad Wilson

School Board Members

President Michelle Caudill

Dianna Brodine

Donna McGinity

Kyle McNorton

Chris Travis

Christi Weiler

Braden Werner

Featured Evaluated	YES	NO	Comments
Did the meeting start on time?	x		
Was the agenda available	x		
Were any items not on agenda discussed?		x	
Did it appear that agenda items were discussed ahead of time?		x	
Were there any items amended?		x	
Were members courteous to each other and the public?	x		
Were media members present?		x	
DR. New			Attending as State Board of Ed Representative

Did any members recuse?		x	
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<p>Was there an executive session and for what reason? How long?</p>	<p>x</p>	<p>Motion: Donna McGinty Second: Braden Werner Final Action: 7-0 10. Executive Session Action: B. Safety Action: Motion to go into executive session to discuss the district safety enhancements pursuant to the exception under KOMA for school security matters to ensure the security of the school, its buildings and/or its systems is not jeopardized, and the open meeting will resume in the board room at 7:50 pm. Attendees: Brad Willson, Phil McKay Motion: Michelle Caudill Second: Dianna Brodine Final Action: 7-0 Extend to 8:00 pm. Motion: Michelle Caudill Second: Dianna Brodine Final Action: 7-0 Action: A. Personnel Action: Motion to go into executive session to discuss confidential employee information pursuant to the exception relating to personnel matters of non-elected personnel and the open meeting will resume in the board room at 8:30 pm. Motion: Michelle Caudill Second: Dianna Brodine Final Action: 7-0 Extend to 8:50 pm. Motion: Michelle Caudill Second: Christy Weiler Final Action: 7-0 Marty Nienstedt entered executive session at 8:46 pm. Extend to 9:05 pm. Motion: Michelle Caudill Second: Christy Weiler Final Action: 7-0 Marty exited executive session at 8:56 pm. Brad Willson entered executive session at 8:56 pm. 11. Reconvene the Open Session</p>
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Was there a public comment period? If so who appeared?		X	